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may2019

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Bard

=====

The sky is my best book
long out-of0print
you'll have to borrow
a copy from the light

to enjoy the complicated
wit of its legendary
simplicity. I read it
from where I sit,

every window shows a page of it.

1 May 2019

= = = = =

What I told Keats when he called
was how ashamed I am
of my syntactical simple-mindedness,
all my rich multilingual grammatical
education wasted on images
,just images. shadows of women
and migrating birds, empty rooms,
shuttered houses, aspen groves—
no delicate chiasms, no optatives,
just sentences a child could read.

1 May 2019

MAY DAY

The cold holds on
and photos fade,
Keep talking till
it all turns green.
The Temple rises
from our empty hands.

1 May 2019

= = = = =

I don't know the question
but the answer
is a mountain
just over the horizon
out of sight.

I know what she was wearing
when she left
but what color
her robes are now
no man can tell.

I don't know the words
to this song,
I make them up
as the music prescribes,

I don't know what day it is
in the ancient calendar
but I know it's time to sleep.

I know the dream itself
will be full of answers

**and I'll forget all of them
by the act of waking.**

**And it is an act,
almost a performance.
And I know you know it too.**

1 May 2019

UCHAIA

in the dream
but what does it mean.
A play we saw once,
Irish liberty or Balkan lust,
dark with music.
Something lost.

The Web search
thinks I mean Achaia,
ancient Greece, but I do not.
Or it doesn't. *Uchaia*,
it said, and I remember
the rushing feeling of a play,
the talking after
of anything we share.

What the word meant
was Get up, get
out of bed in the dark
and write something down.
Definitions come later—
the sound is all that counts.

2 May 2019

= = = = =

The bones of the skull
float on a sea of their own.
Thought is the moss
or weed of such a sea.
We wake enlightened
and confused by dream,
Earth's platelets
moving. Night
is something that relents
but never ends.
I hold you in my arms,
bury my face in your
beautiful hair
and pretend to understand.

2 May 2019

= = = = =

The day turns round
the crown rolls off the altar
an abdication is sure to follow
you can hear it right outside
where the rain-doves coo their mourning cry
o we are named for what we say

so many kings so few few queens,
the tigers in their cages represent,
just represent. Fierce eyes of shadows,
claws of memory, none of the above.
Just grey light settling down around the living,
forgive us for not knowing what we do

the narratives hold us in their hands
compel us to a tryst we do not will
but endure because we think the others do
and there we are, alone in mid-wood,
looking for a holy man to lead us out,
all we can do is try to learn from trees
for we have looked into the pool and lost our faces.

2 May 2019

AN ALTAR

Not what I want
but what she wants—
simple as that.

From inside out
the body is a great
red cathedral

reaching into the sky
and all the humming
blood does praise her.

2 May 2019

= = = = =

Aftermath
long
before knowing

sciens
mind's hands
groping in the dark.

2 May 2019

=====

1.

Who is the hum in the head
and which way is he flying?
Tin roof on abandoned hangars
equals childhood,
are you listening? Are you ever?
Or how can a hum hear?

2.

It is a place like Africa
he imagines, vast and interesting
even apart from people.
River mud and desert sand
and trees with eyes.
He goes there to be scared,
jolted out of the torpid [?] time
where he can't be himself
but it isn't time to be somebody else
at school or church.
The hum doesn't hurt.
The lions in his lingo [?cage?] do not bite.

3.

Psyche heard him whimpering
down below. Folded her wings
around him so he fell asleep,
right there at the kitchen table
all coffee and formica and appetite.
And when he woke
his Africa was gone
and his hum seemed her voice, whispering.

3 May 2019

= = = = =

Ending a sentence is too much like death
or even suicide, he thought, and let
his conversation trail away
with wisps of syntax drifting on and on,
quiet interjections and a noun or two,
no noun ever ends.

3 May 2019

= = = = =

Canopy

of the despairing
field marshall, the mud
of the battlefield not merciful,
the sky's Cyrillic clouds
are hard to read. Lie back
in ordinary doubt. Tomorrow
the blood flows neck you lost
in that strange swordless duel
you fought up there in heaven
while you slept. Dreams hurt.
Let your hands, those slave boys,
polish your tall boots mirror-bright.
You look for your reflection there
but see nothing but the same old sky.

3 May 2019
Shafer

= = = = =

How soon pronouns
turn into one another!
No priest needed
for those sudden weddings,
funerals, christenings.
You becomes she
in a twinkling of anger,
lawyerless divorce!
And there is no tragedy
to equal we becoming me.

3 May 2019
Shafer

NOTTE E GIORNO : Variations

**Day and night, what
else do I know
for sure?**

**1.
What I know
is what I thought
but then a day
made me.**

**2.
Made me different
for sure, I know
that much.**

**3.
Or else maybe
I don't at all,
and day is different
from what I know
and night**

4.

and night knows me
more than I know,
a troll below a stone bridge,
a woman sizing up
a crew of mushrooms
below a tree?

5.

But which is me?
The night won't tell,
the day decides,
it bends its rainbow
across the tiny sky,
wet eyelashes see
the rainbow [?] of truth
of what isn't there

6.

They come again and again
but always only one at a time,
I yearn like any child
for plurality,
O days my toys
arranged
like colts in my corral

7.

Or tin tigers on a table top
the nights come
striped with light,
but only one, only one,

8.

And on this night
I want a different one
and then again, each one
with a different
you within,
each one of you
waiting for day.

9.

O day my night again
I hear them cry
voices in the woods,
trees with eyes

10,

my memory rolled through its register
reaching for a night I thought I knew,
something to do with islands and green wine

old people supped but I drank not,
something about ferry boats sailing in the Sound,
something I could taste still, like salt but sweet

11.

but such things come to light
only on another day,
a day, a day, adieu!
A deity waiting in your head.

12.

There was a caravan of days
straggled through an endless night,
even lit its candle for a little while
then snuffed it with a sunset sigh

13.

don't be so somber,
silly, the day
always comes again—
it's what happens then
that matters,
that matters you.

14.

Or masters the night dread—
that's all I know,
to bless the daylight
and all it knows,
all I know.

15.

Till I forget the sky
and sleep again
wide-eyed into waking,
staring at ledgers
in a language no one knows
where all the transactions
ever made by someone
calling itself me
are written plain

16.

in the alphabet of night
all I know
gets written down
so I can stop knowing it,
stop knowing
and call it day.

17.

We call it a day
to mean we're done
but night is never,
night is never

18.

What's more, we know
day and night so well
but who are we?
does the night exist
to tell us that.

19.

Or whisper after
the stern schoolmaster
or each day?

20.

each day
a task
each night
a touch
O if it could
be easy as that.

21.

Only the simplest things
could lead us so
easily astray—
my hands are cold,
the light is low,
is this too
what they mean by day?

22.

It comes in the window
gleams in the crystal
image of the Buddha
who conquered the difference
between night and day,
the mind, the mind
inside the mind.

23.

Outside it sounds like day
light in the leaves
the simple beauty of all there is.

4 May 2019

= = = =

I thought I saw someone
rode a white horse
along the highway,
skirting the trees
and the cars went by,

the horse stepped up the hill
around a bend of trees
and was gone from me,
whoever that was
who rode a horse past
my house, whoever
was me watching,

all gone, person, beast,
seeing, passing, passing cars,
only the trees persist.
They know what they have seen.

4 May 2019

= = = = =

Let the esurient
rise, come
to the table, let
the sleepless
rest. What else
can we pray?
That the other
be healed.
The self contrive
to speak
its way and disappear?

5 May 2019

= = = = =

Something missing
from the morning.
Slim breath
of waking,
brief song
of being here.

5 May 2019

= = = = =

What comes inside again?
Unpack again and find
the fingerprints of love,
hoofprints of desire.
O again [?], the wool
looks pretty over your eyes,
truth is a silver
coin dropped in a tin bucket.

5 May 2019

= = = = =

And it said to the mind
put your body into it,
unscrew the hour
and drink all of it down,

it said to the morning
hold your breath till noon
then let the word
you mean escape,

and it said to noon
You are the only one,
fold your clean hands
and remember.

5 May 2019

DEBUSSY IN CHAPEL

Under the form of Christ crucified
the clear clarinet
weaves a wreath of soft loudness
peculiar to the French.

2.

The notes imitate
the colored panes
of the stained glass
ogives over the altar.

3.

Her eloquent shadow
on the polished floor
dances a celebration
we only listen at
like the poor outside
a wealthy wedding feast.
What else though
is music for?

5 May 2019

MOZART CLARINET QUINTET

Cellist's scent
or is it the Viola?
Perfume wafts
against the music.

2.
Mozart's clement
optimism intent
on bringing us
to all the dark places
and out again.

3.
The music comes
in movements
so there must be stillness
here, somewhere here,
the rest of us are silent,
listening. Listening
must be the stillness
movement marries.
We are brides at last
in an everlasting wedding.

5 May 2019

= = = = =

To have something
to say

“what’s
the good word?”

Can I give you a whole sentence

(The priestess in fawn robes lifts up a chalice.

Children run across a pavement scrawled with chalk.)

and call it a word?

Can I lift the shade

and see you standing there,
facing away, where the light
seems to be coming from
dragging colors with it?

What is in the cup?

What do the chalk marks say?

(In Hollywood they play pool naked

but go swimming fully clothed—

that’s how you know,

know it’s not a word,

I give you my word,

a word is never naked never clothed.)

The cup is full of gemstones

of moderate value,

garnets and amethysts and coral,

and from these bright remainders
a new world comes into being,
no diamond needed,
just her bare will
that there should be
something there,
a new-found land
beyond the reach of greed.
The children race across
the chalk-scribbled scripture
of a whole new bible,
their eager footsteps
rub all the letters out
chalk dust speaking in the air,
every word a new religion.

6 May 2019

= = = = =

Trading places
Prague for Bethany,
this hand for that knee,
a game with no beginning.
Name is your garden—
grow. Now tell
me what you flower
so, so I can know
the scent of meaning
as I pass.
A garden is permanent—
only the flowers fade.
I say that almost
without sadness now
in this cold spring
waiting for them to rise,
only the daffodils
(those asphodels)
have given us
their pale golden hope.
And hope is another form of healing rain.

6 May 2019

VEERING FROM LIVY

1.

Drag the comforter
off the sleeping child—
it's time for the leaves
out there to do their work

the sudden everywhere of green.
Get the kid out of bed,
*I wake and build the city
already there around you.*
It happens every day.

2.

Romulus is Remus.
Romulus with a trowel
digs out the furrow
around his city-to-be,
to mark out, to keep

the civic space, patriarch
garden safe from dream.
Remus is the dreaming self,
leaps across the line,
carries the dream into the day
and Romulus slays him.
But it is too late. Romulus
is the diminutive of Remus,
little wake-up Remus
of the pallid daytime.
But Remus's blood is still
on his hands. The city
will never be safe from dream.
Since Romulus too must sleep
and down the seven hills and stream
the truthful phantoms dance
the lordly lovely images
by which we live.

3.

I thought I was awake
but I was still asleep
deep in the dream called language.
And will I be slain
if I wake, blunder into civic silence?

The green tumult of the spring trees
gives me some hope,
we can breathe the images into day.
And the sky does not know how to lie.

7 May 2019

= = = = =

Casting chance
aside
they gave us names.

Esmeralda. Porphyria.
Names are diseases,
names are stones.

Stand on a tower
and drop you name
into the well of air

iy will whisper
our true meaning
as it falls.

There is a lyric here
from a lost song,
scratch marks on silence.

7 May 2019

=====

I don't trust them if they come from there.
Where is there?
Or where they were born
or where they first heard language
as church bells over the meadows
or the muezzin in the tower
or the ram's horn once a year.
But that's almost everywhere almost everyone.
True, alas, true, trust is so close to the heart,
I trust only those who go far, far
and never leave here.

8 May 2019

= = = = =

In the middle night
the crow calls
silently.

 Know
what I mean?
At morning the dark
hides under leaves—
night never really goes away.
The crows told me so.
But I haven't seen one in days—
if I close my eyes
I might hear one call.

8 May 2019

THE POET, THE THICKENER

Dichten = condensare

—E.P.

O the Bacchantes
did not deal kindly
with Orpheus,
but according
to their kind
they did.
We do what we are,
isn't that so, Ezra?
Orpheus
kept singing, no matter,
no matter but music
the words found for him
and he sang.

isn't that the *dichten*
you mean,
Ezra, the *condensing*
of abstract
into sense, sound
we call music?

2.

And isn't that the tree,
the tree we mean
when we pronounce
our guesses

into a patient world?

8 May 2019

ε

The children's building blocks
with the alphabet on them
so easy to read
 fall off the table,
mix _themselves up
on the soft green carpet—
isn't that the tree you mean,
the epsilon at Delphi,
the alpha on the chapel wall,
and song the end of all things,
and you are, you are the start of it all

8 May 2019

=====

Or somehow might help to begin
Persian luxuries as Romans guessed [?]
weak'd the virile and wombed the wit.
dainties, dreams vs. deeds, Desires.
They walked through prayers
with open mouths, breathed in truth
and let their short-swords
clatter to the tiles. Climb up on me,
she said, and all their philosophy
lay silk to her lap. All I had to do
was put flowers in along the way.

8 May 2019

= = = = =

Writing for the sake of writing
holding the flowers
high above the text
so the scent of lilac, say,
redeems the careless word,
the casual take,
mistake.

And then the words
knew how to begin
a conversation
between two lovers, say,
who have never met
but both can smell the lilacs.

8 May 2019

=====

An[d] I have leave to love thee
said the flower I held closer,
a wide-eyed golden face,
an eye or two of almost blue.
But I'd find no scent therein
so love must be a matter of the mind
after all, a _____ more than a throb,
a quiet certainty worth living for?
I looked at the flower
and let it do all it would.

8 May 2019

= = = = =

Scribbles on the way
Nowhere on the highway
candlestick and blossoming clouds,
mountains hide, the streets
go on and on but not a city yet,
frat house and sorority and spoiled [?] dogs
and one old man allowed to smoke a pipe—
you know the town
where nobody lives
and everybody is.
Follow the big trailer truck to learn the way,
51 feet of empty space
hurtling along a godsent road.

9 May 2019

= = = = =

Not clear if anything is yet.
Delight to toy with common things,
as if my thought had fingers.
It is strange to remember
only the feeling of a dream
and not the images,
or only one image, a window
in a living room at night
giving onto a sunporch in the dark.
To have spent the night
with so many people
and come back with no names,
no addresses.
It is strange to have been
somewhere and be back,
trailing a few ribbons of meaning.
I think from where I've been.

9 May 2019

= = = = =

**Particle physics—
this moment
a tiny drop of ink
at the lip of the pen.**

9 May 2019

= = = = =

**And then the trees
devoured the sky.**

9 May 2019

= = = =



Is she calling
or is she listening.
Or is that right hand
held in blessing?
Is it Mary two hundred
years before the Crucifixion,
is it Artemis long after
people stopped believing?
She seems with her no-eyes
to see us better, she looks

over my shoulder and sees
what's coming. What is always.
And what is always on the way.

= = = = =

Nearing the other
two horns call in the woods
how long it's been
since we were anywhere

a star said us
and we listened
the horn called again
then hoofbeats of frightened animals

then silence again
as much of it as a forest
can hold, all
those leaves talking too

and branches even in winter.
We were born there maybe,
we went to school in those sounds,
everything reminded us

of another place, another womb.
They had no map of the place
so they gave us the land itself,
we scholar our way through it every day.

10 May 2019

= = = = =

Waiting for the outside.
The Austro-Hungarian Empire
of the human head
has so many languages,
even the Latin of the tendons,
muscles, sinews, bones.
If the skull had legs
it could walk alone.
But I have to take
me with me when I go
looking for that distant,
legendary country
outside myself.
I have pilgrim'd towards it
so many years,
dragging this grandfather clock of a body
all the way here,
waiting for the music to open its door.

10 May 2019

= = = = =

What were we waiting for
fighting for
but the right to be
and be apart?
Wasn't that the zeal
comes with having a name,
the spiritual fingerprints
curled out by fear and desire?
To be different,
to be a country of one's own.

11 May 2019

= = = = =

7 AM big
truck idling
loud by window
open first
mild night.
Spring. Saturday's
only birdsong.
Go away go
away but
only the pillow
can hear me.

11 May 2019

POETRY

**Rapturous disagreement
with the way things are.**

11 May 2019

= = = = =

If summer is a ranch
spring is a trailer
parked in the shadow of a mountain.
A fox sniffs at the rubber tires,
some days a canvas canopy
folds out to shade
a modest barbecue.
Smoke slides up the mountain.

11 May 2019

LE WEEKEND

O sometimes Sun
my golden sister
you spent last night
swimming in the woods,
your wet footprints on the lawn.
So rain is when you take your bath,
sometimes gleaming in the silver [?] of moonlight,
thunder of the showerhead above.
And now you're soft and clear,
nobody about, you ease
through the trees let me see,
let me see again,
I can hear you coming over the little hill.

11 May 2019

= = = = =

And the window
was the world.
A flute could do it—
pearwood,
Pythagorean fingers.
Or just a word
shouted in the trees.
Orpheus is anyone.

12 May 2019

=====

Think of me as a bar of soap
you rub between your hands,
antiseptic, neutrally scented
whatever that means to you.
Then put me back on my dish
not far from the source of water.
Your hands are cleaner now,
maybe even healthier
whatever that means. I sleep
again among the actual.

12 May 2019

MOZARABIC LITURGY

Two women on the Camino.
How long to cross
the Peninsula? How far
to everybody's Brother
waiting by the sea?

2.
*I know so much
to be so ignorant*
I carved that on the plinth
on which I set my statue.
You smiled as you passed by,
rightly ignoring my tears.

3.
Only so much I can tell you.
They went all the way
and every step they took
on the way to the shrine
was a shrine too,
countless sanctuaries,
purposeful contact with the ground.
This earth they thought it was.

12 May 2019

=====

The e-mail coming from in-side
I wait to read at dawn.
Messages melding through the night
summon me now. Dawn
is whenever the words come through—
Light is their favorite,
not their only messenger.

12 May 2019

= = = = =

There is no movement
in this picture.
The eyes have the vacant look
of someone who hears
a ram's horn far away,
on Purim, or a Mahler
symphony, a desert sound,
an ancient scar on silence,
as if he went to sleep
listening to music
and may not wake
or not until the music changes.

13 May 2019

= = = = =

There is a rule here
somewhere, *regula*
something that tells the monks
what to do and when to do it.
Monks and nuns—
what else are we
who live out our small confusions
in the vast monastery of the Sun,
making up stories of why we are here,
praying in languages we don't understand,
planting the walled garden of the Earth
but O the music! Maybe it
is the rule by which we live.

13 May 2019

= = = = =

Once I lived in the south of a city
where the ocean lived
and did all my thinking for me.
Now I have to think for myself
like a car driving down a forest road
in the dark. My headlights
none too bright.

13 May 2019

= = = = =

**In the desert
learn loveless laws.
In the river forgiveness.
In the mountain forget.
In the sea be born again.**

13 May 2019

= = = = =

Schoolboy logics
girl on a pier
equals a far island.
Too shy to dream.
One reaches out a hand
to touch the rail—
maybe that's enough of the ferry,
enough of the journey.
The cold wet wood.
The hand comes home.

13 May 2019

= = = = =

(Dream Medicine)

After the camel bit you
I hurried out,
found a girl,
bit her on the hip
and laid her down,
brought you close.
Instantly her wound and yours
sprang together and were married,
flew away across the field.
The girl leapt up and ran
back where she'd come from.
You were nervous
standing there so we fled too—
but where she lay
a little piece of bread appeared,
we picked it up and it
fed us as we too went away.

14 May 2019

= = = = =

Things put together.
Things as they are.
Short breath of morning
fingers hold a small stone bowl
krater the Greeks called it
and filled it with wine.
I like it better filled with breath.

14 May 2019

= = = = =

Soft sky.
A pleasantness
for the eye,
like going to the zoo
in Prospect Park
when all the animals
are asleep.
The sky my seal pool
gleaming.

14 May 2019

= = = = =

1.

Not *saeva*,
 not indignation,
a parable only,
a mild rain.
Forgive the world
he thought
it doesn't mean it.

2.

In the remission
of all senses
the little liberty
of love persists.

3.

There is a dwelling
inside telling—
that much he knew
to live in. Beyond.

4.

Scar tissue
of an earlier world,
he feels it,
you feel it
under the fingertips of your thought.

5.

Don't lose heart—
the light comes back/

15 May 2019

= = = = =

This comes from nowhere.
This does not exist.
We try for comfort
in a pebbled world.
Imagine a mattress,
growling of the bee,
spring shirt [?],
an answer coming
in motherese.
Maybe, maybe, holy head—
rest along the edges of,
the crests of, of
all you find.

15 May 2019

BAGATELLES

(Pretending it's OK
makes it so.
Everything is pretense—
is it not so?)

(I didn't want
to sign my name
to this so
I let my name
run out of ink)

(*Bagatelles* mere
shuttlecocks to keep
you worried—
what are words
for else?)

(A little ____
a little headache
Happy Morning
sleepers wake)

(No one calls
your name—
that's how you know
you are the Chosen)

(Spirited defense
of nothing much,
with music,
uilleann pipes
and zithers all
pretending to be folk
when it's only me)

(Yestereve from cloudless blue
a shake of raindrops fell—
no matter how hard we try,
we live just around the corner from the real)

(In the deep shadows
below all the new leaves
a sense of sigh,
a feel of sleep)

(Trying to read difference
and getting only distance—
as if an apple
fallen from no tree
or none nearby— today
there is no weather)

(Can't elope
if she's not home)

(Trivial.
Always meant
where three ways meet.
The start
of everything.)

(I could give you
even less
but you would
like it even more)

Let me lie down
and start the day again,
all I need's a
good night's morning)

(Waiting to get better
makes it worse.
Be there right now.)

(Trivial twists and turns,
even these mice need to feel)

16 May 2019

= = = = =

How heavy the trucks
that carry everything.
Another friend
has died in the night
so many miles ago.
It happens while we sleep,
Dionysus climbs
back on his tiger
and takes the world away,
back east.
If we know how to wake
it will come to us again,
and someone will be on it,
though not her, not here.
Yet his face is so clear,
clear as his voice in me still.

16 May 2019

= = = = =

If I were a system
I would sigh,
all the nine o'clock cars
scurrying to work,
and I in my skull
looking out of my bones
at a hurry I somehow
have lost the habit of.

16 May 2019

= = = = =

**Working at home
makes you a gnome.**

16.V.19

= = = = =

And the famous little cloud
no bigger than my hand at arm's length
has come to us again,
this time from the north,
over the white pines,
resting above them, telling.
And we have to do what we are told,
become what we see, change
into luminous apparitions of our own.
Now I send my phantom out to meet you all,
meet me there, you too safe in semblance.

16 May 2019

= = = = =

I said to the learned surgeon
cutting my face away
But I'm a poet,
how shall I dseemo? Ah,
Pushkin, Pushkin, there
was a poet he said.

16 May 2019

= = = = =

The cost of dream
a city of it
turbulent cold weather
shopping by night,

everything goes into a paper bag,
I am the mule of all I meant,
haul it through the giddy streets

and one huge crossing where no traffic comes,
quiet as a \$20 bill.

17 May 2019

= = = = =

**Sweep aside the answers!
Let the questions grow again,
flourish in spring rain—
until the sky is filled
with previous uncertainty,
precious uncertainty.**

17 May 2019

= = = = =

Making a mark
to mean I'm home,
scratch on the wall,
spill on the doorstep
a few drops of coffee—
like everything else
brought from far away.

17 May 2019

T= = = = =

ake so long
to be away—
the Emperor will wonder
where his flowers have gone
to come home
in such colors.
Somewhere he knows
there is a sea—
Sea does that, sea
heals, even a flower.

17 May 2019

= = = = =

**If we have one of these
why do need one of those?**

17 May 2019

(SYLLABICS

**Five strong sloths strive towards crests
a big pig eats its feed.**

(2 6-syllable lines— but how many seconds to say?

**9 for the first, 4 for the second,
speaking in a normal way.**

Breath is a muscle too.]

17 May 2019

(

DISJECTA MEMBRA

*

Tamsulosin — as if the name
a mind wakes with
itself meant anything
spell it how you will)

*

(Near enough to read
the no in her eyes
it snows in your heart)

18 May 2019

= = = = =

Abandoned roadside
bereft of its going,
forbidden entry
to public words—
always the wonder
of what is waiting there
there, in the woods,
Christian mysteries
of the pagan dawn—
the quiet color of the world
texts us a morning,
a message everything reads,
everything reveals.

18 May 2019

= = = = =

I've done something,
not enough—
there is still time,
a minute will do the trick,
the right minute,
sheltered under Milarepa's leaf.

18 May 2019

= = = = =

Things to say, things to obey.

**Dawn comes in the window of the empty bank,
no scarier than a horse standing in a field
the way they do, being white or dappled,
looking as if it belongs there. The light too,
sneaking through the blinds, the money asleep.**

18 May 2019

= = = = =

I need the sleep
sunrise denies—
close my eyes
before the clock,
that bourgeois cock,
flaps up and cries.

18 May 2019

= = = = =

**The nature of everything we see
is a triptych, Netherlandish,
the saints who brought us here,
the golden centered Here of Now,
and then the angel to take it all away.
And everything is the center.**

18 May 2019

= = = = =

Man writing in ink at a window
in natural light. I could be
any morning these two thousand years—
no wonder I feel old.

18 May 2019

SCRIPT

The soft of written hand,
the ceremony
later on of reading it,
room for doubt,
room for the divine Mistake.

18 May 2019

= = = = =

I am just a schoolboy
playing with the light.

The heart on its little stand
works hard to be an altar
where love alone is served.

18 May 2019

=====

1.

The curvature of space
is part of the answer.
The vast creation of matter
green matter, every
spring by every plant and tree—
where does matter come from?

2

Doubt stills the critic's rocking chair.
He moves too fast to be in one place—
the sun is shining, isn't it?
Sandals don't protect the toes.
Cold spring, too early for the rose.

3.

Aquinas said that matter
can never be unmade,
only transformed. But where
the leaves come from,
so many, so many,
all at once, he doesn't say.
Or if he does he points out

a loving arduous Creator god
renewing us at every turn—
the wood we burn in winter
gave the apples we ate all fall.

4.

But our paradigm (we must
have one, consciously or otherwise)
is friskier than that.

We speak of nature, form
and growth and patterning, but still
can't tell where *stuff* comes from,
all the leaves all the trees put out
last week and next week and the week before,
trillions of leaves each marked and meant,
and the great horse chestnut by the Rokeby road
candling its flowers in sudden cool flame.

18 May 2019

= = = = =

Things on the mind—
sad place for them to be,
that should be wordless music,
with only such images as music
sings into our heads,
pictures of pure movement,
snapshots of touch.

18 May 2019

TAKEN INTO THE LAND

Through Holland Park and Shepherds Bush
and out of London heading west.

That's the last I knew till I woke
on a forest road fast through the dark
The driver still had nit sooken
but she smiled at me int e rearview mirror
when she was I was awake again.

=====

Low-flying
single-engine plane
Saturday afternoon
lawnmower in the sky,

18 May 2019

= = = = =

Bee-sting mother
Mediterranean, the entire
sea in her mouth,

so dry, so dry
the word she says —

they thought to please her
by carving her image from stone
or casting it, cire-perdue,
in gildable bronze
with lapis eyes.

I do not think she minded,
or took much stock
of how we pictured her.
She moved always
in the middle,
middle of each one of us,
her kiss an inner sting
which made us think,
think hard, feel,
think, feel and know.

18 May 2019

= = = = =

Let me see the linger
that's all I want,
what's left from Troy,
Lydia, Crete before Minos,
her shadow across the sea.
Coming towards me.

For I live in the linger,
let me see what I only know
and know too what I only see.
Her shadow on the water and I drink.

19 May 2019

= = = = =

A red thing
to say morning
cock's comb
scarlet over white
must be the reason—

the dark was mostly muttering,
like lovers whispering
the endless conspiracies of flesh,

but then the sky came back
the famous *alba*
and love retreated into sleep
safe a few more hours
till the machinery of day kicked in

and for a few hours even lovers
have to live like everybody else.

19 May 2019

= = = = =

**Run the numbers
through the field of syllables
and hear new sense get said.
Then lead the words back home
and see where they were born
and how they made love along the way.**

19 May 2019

= = = = =

Force one's life together,
pack it tight with a spoon
against the curve of every day
till it's yours and only so,
no butcher and no baker,
just that handle in the sky
turns you your turn.

19 May 2019

HISTORY

Then ink pours out of its bottle
and obliterates all it's just written down.

19 May 2019

= = = = =

**Come back Mizrayim,
your pyramids needgating,
your gods though are still young.**

**Life after life
is what you always mean.
You gave us Moses and adobe—
what a strange house you made us live.**

19 May 2019

= = = = =

The handle bar, the hot seat,
first spring mild day —
some people wait for this—
for some, it never goes away.

19 May 2019

DÉRIVE

The world is my coracle
adrift on a formless sea.
Or are there *shapes inherent*
in the fact of being,
fact of drifting?

The serenity of old translations
lull the wit the way beauty does
into sheer, mere, admiration.

19 May 2019

= = = = =

Too early to be me.
She who was the helmet-
maker's beautiful wife
stares at me from
the pages of the trees.
I am not me yet, not near
but on the way. Rodin
taught Rilke something
of all this, or the other
way, the central kingdom
teaching the far borderland,
that France?

In my mirror I see
my own disheveled hair,
a bandaged forehead
but no war in sight.
Surely I must be nearly there
and yet it's not. It knows
and I do not. That
is how any mirror works,
a tree, an old photo in a book.

20 May 2019

= = = = =

The long night's thunder
reminded us of Egypt—
blocks of limestone piled,
fallen. The hailstones
rattled down like Rome,
chariot-wheels churning out war.
A world. The darkness
only was our own,
deep, without resemblance,
shot through with lightning—
the mind's flash quickly fades away.

20 May 2019

BIRTHDAY

for Tamas

I want it to be a strange city
strange to me but not to you
I want it to be grey
old stone old copper roofs
I want you to be walking
across the public square
in the shadow of a cathedral
no, not a cathedral, just a church
a big ordinary church with a tower
or two ordinary towers
I want you to be walking in shadow
shadow of the spires, want you to walk
steadily, proudly through the shadow
I want you to come out of the shadow
then and look up at the bright sky
between the tall buildings, those grey
stone buildings we put up everywhere
there, in that city, I want you to be walking
and looking up from time to time
looking up and knowing something
and what you know will never desert you.
You knew, you know, and what you know

walks with you, walks in you,
whatever you do you will keep doing
will keep talking until everything
is told. Until everything is heard.

—21 May 2019

= = = = =

At the very end
she walks across the water
to heal him

the final image
of what it all meant
the gods, the transformations,

our becoming.

20/21 May 2019

WATERWORKS

The last cry is maybe
star over rooftop
gull on a piling vigilant.

The bay there the river here,
the ever over us, the blue,
the sometime green. I said salt
and you heard soul.

At middle night differences come true.
What was I telling you
could I drink from your mouth,
shelter all of me under your hand?

2.

Because when it comes down to it
I only believe in the sea.

That doesn't mean I'm a romantic,
it means I come from an island
and carry it with me wherever I go.
Science people say we all came out
of the ocean to begin with
and some of us are still there.

20/21 May 2019

= = = = =

Pain in the knee—
a new pain!
A pain I've never felt before
rouses me
to talk about it—
want else is pain for?

Propaideutic, leading
to learning, matter for songs,
sonnets, syntheses.
I rub ointment on the afflicted part
and hear Nietzsche's groans.

(see NB 425L15)
20/21 May 2019

= = = = =

No one waiting
no one whispering
Night is its own animal,
its sleep let me drop.
I stare at my skin
in the light of a small lamp,
I see a stretch of pale
scribbled all around me—
i/m not just look at it,
I live inside the thing I see.
All of us, everywhere in the dark.

20/21 May 2019

TEA

**You upset the Archbishop of Canterbury
when you did not quite finish your tea.
I was miffé too, since I had slaved
to make it strong and sweet with milk
enough to dazzle its clear mahogany,
brought it to you with a slice of lemon cake
to dignify the fading afternoon.
The archbishop was not pleased to see
the quarter-inch of tepid khaki tea
left at the bottom of the tartan mug.
O love, please drink all of me!**

20/21 May 2019

= = = = =

Ominous buckwheat
our Saracen corn
flowers for breakfast
because children credit
at least a little of what they're told.

2.

And I sailed those clouds once,
duckweed on the pond of heaven,
they let me fly a little open cockpit plane
let me control it at the top of the climb
and for five mintes I was more than Icarus,
sailing fover the fields of Sullivan and Pike
before the pilot took back the controls.
I was ten years old. I was the whole sky.

3.

Every word said
says just this:
Remember this.

4.

We always say what *it* means
no matter what we think—
like a flower you offer someone
because you like them or love them
or don't know what else to do
with this frail pretty thing in your hand.

21 May 2019

=====

I you send me stairs
I climb every step
if you send me a door
I open and go in
but what do I find inside?
A bird in another language
a tree growing down
I reach for the light switch
someone puts a plum in my hand.
the taste of it is light enough.

21 May 2019

sGrol.ma.la

(TO TARA)

Green girl of all the world
nimble at all needs
of our kind, we mindish ones,
swift youth of every gesture
quick to comfort , rescue, tell.
These things I know
as once from the skull of all
sheslipped and entered mine,
yours and mine, everyone and all,
greem giril of all the world.

21 May 2019

NOMINA NUMINA

His name meant *They came to me from far away but did not stay*. His name meant *A red-wing blackbird braved the cold of early spring*. His name also meant *He learns great wisdom from a pile of stones*. And his family name meant *Glaciers came through this valley and made us what we are*.

I wish we had names like that in this country, instead of names like *When people talk about him a little light goes on*. Or *People quarreling in church*, which is my name. I wish I could go to a judge and say Change my name, Sir, for me. And he would say What is your new name. And I would be shy, but still say clearly, Sir, my name is *He bowed to a tree and fell asleep, and when he work he knew how to talk*.

22 May 2019

= = = = =

Prophetic strains
harp-beats
oboe-Slavic
heard as sleep
among keyboards
gold overhead—

now tell me what the word
itself was thinking
when you said it.
Or thinking of. Brave
little word, to hold firm
in all our speaking.

22 May 2019

= = = = =

The river curls round and bends
on its way down from the hills
till it runs into the fjörd
(sea-canyon they call it here)
pours into the oncoming tide,
o river that runs two ways at once
a sleeping child breathes in and out.

22 May 2019

= = = = =

The books in my house
neat enough
but like fallen leaves.

22.V.19

SOME SIXTEENTH CENTURY MUSIC

Sing lachrymosa
it could be away easy
tears roll down the cheeks
gravity is everywhere
no one spared
the traditional descent.
The *of* of matter,
what we belong to
by being? We pray not,
we light a little candle
in the back of the mind,
adim chapel lit
by all our stained-glass hope.

22 May 2019

TERRACE, EVENING

I sit here like an emperor
at the Circus Minimus
watching the chipmunk races
swirl around me—
to be a witness
of what does not
concern itself with me!
Exstasy of sheer beholding.

22 May 2019

= = = = =

As if there were something to decide
the sky waits for us. Lucid. Easy.
Reminds me of liberty, the concept,
not the statue of the nice lady in the harbor.
The goddess Amerika. Where was I?
The harbor, the dark green water of the bay,
Narrows, gull and cormorant and seal, and bridges,
bridges... No. The sky, that's what I meant.
There is something about the sky this day,
palest powder blue, as if a thousand clouds
had solved their shapes into formless pallor.
You can't trust me when you leave alone with the sky.

23 May 2019

= = = = =

What do you call
a serenade in the morning?
Matutinal? Sunsong?
Laudation? I want the word
so I can have the thing,
make it myself
but the word's got to be right
or the blessed thing won't work.
Bless originally meant 'sprinkle with blood'
in pagan priest craft, did you know that?
Isn't that song enough for morning?

23 May 2019

= = = = =

Oracles everywhere,
least of our worries.
Go downstairs, attend
to the little fixes
that make the morning work.
Even here the garbage truck
wakes us at dawn—
the city has a way of creeping in.

But silence is a sanctuary
soon comes back. Unlock
the door, check out the actual,
the feel of weather. Wonder.
Welcome would be the right word
for what happens then—

it's printed on the doormat
in case I forget— welcome
all that happens next,
as if that creature ambling up the drive
were a bodhisattva sauntering
from Kailash on his way to me,
to all of us who meet them—

they may take any form
and can show any shape,
squirrel or possum or some man
come about the Bible, morning
hurries to decide. Just welcome,
welcome. Welcome silence home.

23 May 2019

= = = = =

It realms
all round.
It kings circumstance
so that we stand
awkward
lackey courtiers
in weather land.
Credit night
to sneak us through
one more catastrophe,
Armageddon every day.
So sleep if you can,
ranchero, all
your murkey cattle
stampede your dreams
no better than waking.
And then you wake,
a funny little pain
where you had lain.

24 May 2019

= = = = =

To prove this is my tree
I sign each leaf
and send it to you
to bear witness until
you think I must be n love
and I make the same surmise.
Listen, and hear the tree laugh.

24 May 2019

ALBA

incivilities
the languorous
exclusions of a morning,
no phone, no welcome-mat,
Just we.
Love's like that,
an infant clutching
this hour in its fist,
crumbs on the comforter,
Mozart on the Internet
sounding like a daffodil.

24 May 2019

= = = = =

for Robert Twohy

Resistant to ambergris
the scent soon fades,
the memory of it endures—
we live in two worlds.

23 May 2019

AMONG WORDS

The word juggled by
I meant to start with
so I kept still.
Until another
brushed by the door
on her way in.
Golos, a human voice.
Slovo, what she says.

I change all the genders here
to protect
the innocence of all we mean.

2.
So they come and go,
our teachers, words.
These fluttering nuns,
earnest housewives
sending us out to work.
Words, those Breughel peasants
dancing at your wedding
and you marry every one.

25 May 2019

= = = = =

How long listen same machine?
Double-bass said nine-fifteen
the messenger said No.
Live by clock, die by degrees.
It says so in the bubble
a four-year-old wafted
his wand to make fly by your eyes
and vanish in the sun.
I remember doing that,
are you?

25 May 2019

= = = = =

Left-handed coffee
a squeeze of clementine—
chipmunk won't eat Cheezit,
woodpecker pecks my door.
Human voices over the fence!
Not woodpecker, woodchuck.
Not the wall but under the floor.
The world hurries
to rescue me from my thoughts.

25 May 2019

= = = = =

I don't tell stories about the sea
I tell only what the sea tells me
I wouldn't presume to talk about the sea
it would be like interrupting coarsely
the sea's endless patient explanation.

26 May 2019

= = = = =

First day warmer out than in at morning!
78° windless, still. Only cars
know how to move, and not many of them.
The cars are all at church praying to the earth
on whose ancient blood they live.

26 May 2019

= = = = =

**Draw a chart of it
what they call a map
and leave it to the world
to fill the countries in.**

26 May 2019

= = = = =

A heart
be it noted
comes to one
point only,
points
only one way.

26 May 2019

= = = = =

**Disparaging asparagus
is one way of dining out.
Blame the waiter, inspect
for cleanliness the gaps
between tines of your fork.
Lecture about locavores,
rant against preservatives.
Be suspicious of the lettuce,
frown at sugar. Please
let me plead a previous
engagement with humility.**

26 May 2019

ASTRONOMIA NOVA

1.

A roof that runs us
seed corn scattered
for birds we are
or were to begin
to make sense
heeding starry instructions
light lessoning us
particle by syllable until.

2.

Some are candles,
some just seem.
Learn to tell between
which ones you need.
Some stars have an animal smell,
rough edge of dawn.

3.

So be wise anew
with the old tools,
glimmer and pattern,

the skin of time
scars easy
but heals fast.
We are in school
as long as we last.

27 May 2019

= = = = =

He thought he smelled
a beast out there
it was his own anxiety
rotting in his thought.
He thought the wind
was cold today, it was
his courage blowing away.
Courage once ,eamt
what the heart thinks,
but who knows now
how to write it down?

27 May 2019

= = = = =

Mercy Corps.
Give the bone its due,
it hurts but it holds you.

The other side of being done.
The other side of being.

27 May 2019

SCENA

Helmet, had to be bronze,
toppled off table—
it was full of small fruit,
grapes green and purple,
kumquats, little limes.
Scattered, star-like on the ground,
the helmet still rolling around.

27 May 2019

DREAD ALLEGIANCES

**Catch the goat hair
floating in cow's milk
Kunik cheese linsey-woolsey
counterfeit Koran
but then the weather
all of a piece with memory
Aquarium at Battery
city looming downtown
eerily floating giant horizon
Irish-Jewish kinship loves my nation!
Or perhaps Queens real estate
stimulates traffic under viaducts
while xenophobic Yankees zigzag
through yjtpmgs, avoiding immigrants.**

**Old money North Shore escapees!
Call it religion and close your eyes—
take a deep breath,
take a day off
take the ferry to Rockaway.
Ecco! Bravura solutions to null-problems!**

27 May 2019

MEMORIAL DAY 2019

Adipose inadequate
zygomatic arch
eyebrow itches.
It's a holiday!
a remember day
words and words—
whose blood was it
irrigated our furrows?
Who made the sun so bright?
Every day must be a psalm of praise
or else we die.

27 May 2019

= = = = =

Bikini Bridge
to my old streets
the boys wear hats
without a brim
the girls too wear
long dark curls
stroll hand in hand
over the ____ ____
sidewalks in the world
scrawled true
with chalk by kids
who almost knew
the deep meanings
of what the scrawl
This is a song
to the biggest fish
of all, my island.
Everyone was born
right there on Crescent
Street on Brown
on Pitkin Avenue
Avenue U. All
Chabad and Ralta,

shanty and shine,
open doors
but no one dares,
Brooklyn my own.

27 May 2019

The pleasing breeze
of Rhinebeck afternoon
a church is nearby
but you can't go in,
all that it has to tell us
you can see from the street,
a ____ ____,
windows full of colors
you can't see through,
____ arches over
locked doors.
Robins flutter in and out the tree.

27 May 2019

____ _
of ____ tree
__ aloft
to give me shade.

I was someone
wanted by the door,
lanterns on a pole
no flame in it.

Salome says the scent
of love is deeper
than the scent of death
but I wonder.

April ____, let
her tailpipe teach her breath
how not to be.
She was in love,
a fatal place,
her beautiful face
flushed with ____.

27 May 2019

I can be a tree
anywhere, even in the sea.
It is a matter of thinking
hard upward and soft out—
come rest in my shade.

27 May 2019

NEAUX

Little village in the core of France
where I woke this morning
thickly content in someone
else's dream. Not a stranger
all round are things
that tend to mother us.
Mama. Crossroads. Mama.
Crow on a roadsign. Let me,
let me, let me.
And a dream does.

28 May 2019

= = = = =

It looks like rain
but I forget.
Willing pages
of an absent Queen,
full of words and waiting.

28 May 2019

= = = = =

No sun but light
gleam on a wet cable.
Life goes by
making do
with things like this

28 May 2019

= = =

O let it sink in
the sense
long grass growing round the ferns

prayers start this way
a hope
leaps into language and we breathe

and never bate the breath
all sky
insists on: let you say it.

29 May 2019

= = = = = = =

**Sometimes things
just happen to have shape
sunshine blundering through trees**

29 May 2019

= = = = =

Loaded with equipment
to be where I am,
I stand naked as a goat
in a meadow, my work
cut out for me all round

29 May 2019

= = = = =

**What if no one went back to work?
How long would we last?
Tell that to an anarchist:
Going to work is not for the boss Indra's Net
it's for everyone.
Of services and obligations,
and in our dreams too
we share far more than we know.**

29 May 2019

= = = = =

What is left of the Original Space?

**It seems to me the more we fill it
the closer we are to the beginning,
damp white cloth swiped across the brow of time.**

29 May 2019

= = = = =

Little pieces
too little even
for bagatelles,
call them
small maybes,
ragtails,
somebody's perfume
passing fast.

29 May 2019

= = = = =

**Everything comes back to be again.
That is the problem.**

29 May 2019

= = =

= = = = =

Can the origin
cohere
with the flattering music
with which we welcome
the ardent day,

saying to it as we do
You are the only one,
you are our sacred Now?

Assume it can, assume
that we are always naked
deep inside our fancy clothes,
our imagined cover-ups
that hide nothing
of what we actually are.

Assume the beginning
is always there, close,
close, like a fingernail
or a pagan's foreskin,

always ready to lose
itself in some new religion,

always renewed,
so that like music
we can start again.

29 May 2019
to Elgar's first symphony

= = = = =

As if the word had ended
halfway out of someone's mouth
and she, startled into silence,
suddenly was free.

29/30 May 2019

= = = = =

He saw the breeze
shiver the leaves
an instant later
felt it on his chin.
A beautiful poem
he thought, why
spoil it with words.

29/30 May 2019

= = = = =

Things waiting, things caring.
Blue moon of winter
remembering, he stole
a glance at the sky.
The sky stared back.
It is that way in springtime,
nothing ever really sleeps.
He tries to, though,
tries to shelter darkness in his mind.

29/30 May 2019

= = = = =

So many words
for one same thing
and no man knows
what it really is.

We have been here
for centuries trying
to name what we don't know

instead of just asking her to tell.

29/30 May 2019

= = = = =

**We get the whole story wrong—
but that's what stories are for.**

29/30 May 2019

= = = = =

Hidden meanings
bird on a branch
middle of the night
a swallow seen.
Every text a mesh
of secret vowels,
masterful consonants
spilling out slowly
what it really means.
Try me and see.

29/30 May 2019

**Spell yourself
as many ways as you can.
The right name
always comes last.**

29/30 May 2019

+++

(= marks made by Victor leaping on keyboard)

= = = = =

Cat on hind legs
better than me,
can't tell you why,
just so, a ball of day,
an egg warmed in the hand.
Do you understand?
I'm giving you all the information
at my command, hand,
egg, cat, and the bass wood outside,
Tilia, semaphore, furry paws?
This is confession, an egg carton
each socket plump with a nice brown egg,
truck at a stop sign, air brakes,
got it? I'm running out of cards,
the meld is any minute,
cathedral in my pocket, yes,
it was I who ate the sky.

30 May 2019

= = = = =

Base work of sub-sciences,
using your right hand to plow a field,
philosophy. Stop thinking and remember.
Who was moving? Who was standing still?
Where was the train going?
You saw a lake in left side as you went
it must mean you were coming home.

30 May 2019

THE PARADOX

Not a footnote—
a whole new chapter
each day writes
in the great text
of your life.
But any day
you stop.
The book is formed,
perfectly complete.

31 May 2019

= = = = =

Swallows where they always used to be
the little bridge the leafy stream
sometimes things come back that never left.

31 May 2019

= = = = =

Civilization began
not with tools or swords
or even wheels—
it started with the first
bridge we ever built,
to cross over, to break
the boundaries, to go
there, we sinners,
children of Eve.

31 May 2019

ON THE DAY THREE_E

**A good day to go
and be there a while,
eat something in the mountain
or on the river.
On this day everywhere
you go is home.**

31 May 2019

= = = = =

**There is no such thing as small
the littlest cloud swallows the sun.
And my hand can hide the cloud.
Mila taught us we can all
take shelter under any leaf.**

31 May 2019

= = = = =

Narrow escape
the phone rang
and I let it.

Let things sing all they want—
I'm smiling out the window
at a quiet tree.

But only those
who know me well
recognize it as a smile.

31 May 2019

ERUV

around our deeds
our ways—Let
there be imagined
an airy boundary
inside which we
are safe to move
and right to do so
among time's Talmud's
fierce constraints,
things as they are
outside this immense
private space.

31 May 2019

= = = = =

And with this learned pen I wrote
a serenade of linden leaves
fanning above my true love's shoulders
while she feeds and teases her favorite beast,
a nimble chipmunk from the hole up the hill.

31 May 2019

= = = = =

Fortress mentality
the siege is on
today but not tomorrow.
I Forgive all those who
bother me, blame me,
hear my words wrongly,
get me wrong.
I forgive, using this
new pen. All
my questions were wrong,
all their answers right.
And so good night.

31 May 2019

= = = = =

Haricots verts
on the stairs,
elk meat
on the table.
Who are these
humans, why
do they eat the world?
All they really need
is oxygen.
Hydrogen.
Carbon.
Nitrogen.
and a little
sugar
on a silver spoon.

31 May 2019

TEMPLUM NOVUM

Build it with words only,
the *melody* the rabbis
said would come next time,
words alone, and let the song
grow—sp ntaneous
emissions — from the words
themselves, their dance
before the Ark of silence,
their mutual embraces.
Build it with words alone
and it will sing by itself
and stand firm through
the mysterious age to come.

31 May 2019

= = = = =

Signs on store windows
in Hebrew letters
hard to read.
But what I knew
was in the glass
itself, letters,
runes, signs.
All I wanted
was the surface.
The dark interior
full of strangers
I leave to others.

31 May 2019